Reading Toolkit: Grade 5 Objective 3.A.4.a

Standard 3.0 Comprehension of Literary Text

Topic A. Comprehension of Literary Text

Indicator 4. Analyze elements of poetry to facilitate understanding and interpretation

Objective a. Use structural features to identify poetry as a literary form and distinguish among types of poems

Assessment Limits:

Types of poems, such as haiku, form/shape poetry, etc.

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Reading Grade 5 Objective 3.A.4.a

Activities

The teacher should place students in small groups and provide each group with a series of poetry texts that will serve as resources. Poetry texts should be marked so that students access specific poems. Each group should be assigned a structural feature of poetry as its focus. At earlier grades focuses can be refrain, stanzas, shapes, rhyme, etc…, and at more advanced grades focuses can be structures associated with types of poems like ballads, lyrics, elegies etc…(Definitions for all poetry structures and types can be found in the Clarification for Standard Three, Indicator Four.) Students in the group should read the marked texts. After the reading of each text, students in the group should take notes about their assigned focus within the poem. After reading all the marked texts and reviewing their notes, each group of students should complete a comprehensive judgment about their assigned structural feature. To extend this activity, each group can share their findings with the rest of the class or each group can move from area to area, reading the assigned poems and the comprehensive statement of the original group.

The teacher should place each student with a partner. Each pair of students should receive a single poem that contains some or all of the structural features of poetry. Around the room the teacher should place posters which list a single structural feature of poetry at the top of the poster and two columns extending the vertical length of the poster. One column should be labeled YES and the other column labeled NO. To begin this activity, each pair of students should read his/her assigned poem. With pairs of students beginning at different poster sites, the partners should determine if their poem has that structural feature and then write the poem's title under the YES or NO column. Additionally, the partners should underline/highlight that structural feature on the assigned poem. Once the partners have visited each poster site and identified structural features in the assigned poem, the teacher should review random entries on the charts to ascertain correctness of student responses.

To review or present the different structural features of poetry, the teacher would begin with Cornell notes. Divide a paper in half lengthwise. The left side is blank while the right side has listed the types and definitions of the selected poetry. As the teacher presents each type to the class, each student writes his/her reaction to that type on the left side of the paper. Reactions may be examples the student knows, questions the student might have, likes, dislikes etc…

Sample Cornell Notes

Student Reaction/Response	Notes/Information
I think the story of Beowulf that we read in 7th grade started out as an epic because it tells about his adventures.	Narrative poetry: poetry that tells a story. It can be a ballad or epic. It has plot, setting, characters…

After the students have reacted to each poetry type, students can be placed in small groups to share their reactions to the poems.

After students have been taught the structural features of poems, the teacher should present them with a chart structured like the sample with the number of types of poems the teacher wishes.

Type of Poem	Structural Features	Example
Haiku	Form of Japanese poetry Three lines focused on a single element	
Lyric	Shows thoughts and feelings of one speaker Variety of forms	
Shape	Has form of its subject	

Present students with a packet of poems with different structural features. Using the information on the chart, students should categorize the poems by listing their titles in the Example column. Students should also locate within the poems those structural features that identify that poem as a particular type. If the teacher has a variety of poetry collections available, students might go on a "scavenger hunt" to find examples of each type of poem in those collections.

Clarification

Reading Grade 5 Indicator 3.A.4

To show proficiency of the skills stated in this indicator, a reader will demonstrate an understanding of the elements of poetry which are the components through which poetry is structured and composed. Identification of each component and its relationship to all other components in a poem assist a reader in comprehension of the entire text of the poem. When a poem requires more complex thought processes, a reader advances from identification of poetry elements to the explanation, analysis, and evaluation of those elements. Thinking about all the elements of a poem and determining how they fit together allow a reader to understand a poem in all of its complexity.

In order to identify poetry as a literary form and be able to distinguish a particular poem from other types of poetry, a reader must identify and use a poem's structural features. Poems can tell stories, describe the positive and negative elements of a character, place, or thing, argue a position, express emotions, or create an image. Knowing the structure of a poem helps a reader determine a purpose for the poem and comprehend it in literal and abstract ways.

Structural Features

A line or verse is a single line of poetry.

A stanza is two or more lines of poetry.

A refrain is a series of words or a line of poetry that is regularly repeated within the poem.

A rhyme is a repetition of sounds at the end of words.

A rhyme scheme is an arrangement of end rhymes in a poem. A pattern is organized by assigning a letter of the alphabet to each line. The first line of a poem is assigned the letter A. Each following line of poetry that rhymes with the first line is also assigned the letter A.

Types of Poems

A ballad tells a story and is meant to be sung or recited aloud.

A cinquain is based on syllable or word count. A traditional cinquain moves by line from two syllables to four syllables to six syllables to eight syllables and concludes with two syllables. The more current form of cinquain moves by line from one word to two words to three words to four words and concludes with a single word.

A diamonte moves from a subject in the first line of the poem to a completely different subject in the last line of the poem. The structure of a diamonte by line goes from one noun, the subject, two adjectives, three participles, four nouns, three participles, two adjectives, and concludes with one noun which is different from the noun in the first line.

An elegy is a sad poem which shows grief for the dead.

A haiku is a form of Japanese poetry which has three lines focused on a single element.

A lyric poem can appear in a variety of forms and shows the thoughts and feelings of one speaker.

A narrative poem tells a story in verse.

A shape poem has the form of its subject. For example a poem about a tree is shaped like a tree.

To understand a poem fully with all of its complexities a reader should focus on the meaning/s of each word within that poem that will lead to an understanding of individual lines and continue to understanding of an entire stanza. Poets choose their words with purpose and care. Reviewing the multiple meanings of words and attending to how a word is used contextually helps a reader discern shades of meaning within an individual word. Knowing the denotation of a word is an important first step, but knowing connotations of a word is critical to a reader of poetry. A reader should also be aware of the symbolic value of words in poetry. Knowing that an object or person symbolizes a quality or idea is essential to comprehension.

A critical reader understands that the speaker of the poem is not always the poet. The speaker is the creation of the poet and voices the words of the poem. The speaker has a personality and attitude that is discernable to a reader. Being attentive to the qualities and attitude of the speaker and connecting them to the words of the poem assists a reader with comprehension.

The organization of the words in a poem is another clue for a reader. The actual placement of a word within a line of poetry can be pivotal to understanding. The length of a poem's lines can focus a reader on the importance of certain words within a poem. The division between stanzas of a poem can signal the conclusion of one idea to move to another or the strengthening of an initial idea that continues to evolve throughout the poem. Because the words of a poem are more compact than prose, the placement, denotation, connotation, symbolism, and speaker of the words all become vital elements to creating meaning for a reader.

Because poetry is meant to be read or spoken aloud, the sound of the words is a critical piece of understanding. Listening to the rhyming of words, the organization of the rhyming words, the repetition of sounds, the imitation of natural sounds, and the relationship among these sound devices and how they contribute to the meaning of a poem are all elements a critical reader must explore. Discovering the bond between the sound and sense of a poem assists a reader with comprehension.

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A poem's rhythm is created by the organization of sound from the placement of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry. The difference between stressed and unstressed syllable concerns the degree of emphasis when words are spoken.

Alliteration is a repetition of beginning consonant sounds in words.

Assonance is a repetition of vowel sounds in words.

Consonance is the pleasing arrangement of sounds in words.

Onomatopoeia is the use of words that sound like the natural noises they name.

A poet may use a sound device to emphasize a particular idea, create a melodious sound to foster a pleasant mood, or put together a series of harsh sounds to establish an angry tone. When a critical reader can determine a purpose for the poet's use of sound devices, a reader has constructed meaning from a poem.

In a narrative poem or ballad, the setting of that poem is integral to a reader's understanding. The setting addresses the time and place of the poem's action and plays a role in establishing the mood of a poem. The mood is the feeling of a poem. Mood is created by the poet's choice of words, sensory detail, and rhythm. The attitude of the poet or speaker toward his/her subject is the tone of the poem. Again, the poet's choice of words, sensory detail and rhythm help a reader determine the attitude toward the subject. For more detailed information about setting and mood, consult the Literary Clarification for Indicator Three, and for more detailed information about tone, consult the Literary Clarification for Indicator Seven.